

Hello, and welcome to Making the Most of Public Service Internships, a webinar sponsored by the Interagency Working Group on Youth Programs. I am your host Paul Giguere. We will begin with a word from Michelle Boyd, Society for Research in Child Development policy fellow at the Department of Health and Human Services.

Thank you, Paul. Internships provide young people with opportunities to apply the academic knowledge to the workplace, build skills and network. Federally funded internship opportunities exist to expose young people to public service and provide skill-building and networking opportunities. In today's job market, internships can make a real difference by providing access to opportunities to apply classroom learning in a real world context. The purpose of this webinar is to raise awareness of internship opportunities through the federal government and offer prospective interns suggestions and how to make the most of internships in public service. We hope you all enjoy the webinar.

Thank you, Michelle. Before we get into the segment, I would like to walk everyone through a few technical and logistical items. Please note that all lines are muted and will remain muted throughout the course of discussion so you will not be able to be heard. Your questions are welcome and we will pause at multiple points in today's presentation to share your comments. If you have a question, please type in the Q&A box located at the bottom right of your screen. We will try to get as many questions as possible, given our time allotted. Any question that we do not get to, will be collected and answered in an upcoming brief published on find youth info.gov and the new internships section of Youth Engaged 4 Change. You can visit Youth Engaged 4 Change at engage.findyouthinfo.gov.

This website was developed to: one, encourage you to shape programs, policies and services that affect youth; two, promote meaningful partnerships between youth and adults; three, share resources with youth and young adults; and, four, connect youth and young adults to opportunities funded by the federal government. >>

Today we will explore the world of public service internships with three guests who have plenty of experiences on the topic. As we will learned today, there are many different types of federal internship opportunities. Our guests have a wide variety of experiences. Today we are joined by Bonnie Prestridge, a former intern with the Department of Labor. She is on camera and joining us from California. De'Rell Bonner and Rachel Dorman are on the phone line with us from Washington, DC. De'Rell was a former intern with the US Department of Education. As you will hear today, he is currently using his prior experience as an intern to continue strengthening the internship program at the US. Department of Education. Rachel began as an intern with the US. Department of Labor and now works for US Office of Personnel Management overseeing the federal government's Pathways program, which you will learn more about today.

We hope you will walk away from today's webinar with valuable information about how to get into a federal internship and how to make the most of the experience while you are there. For audience members in the position to help other young people, you will hear about ways you can

help them through this important step in their career journeys. Welcome Bonnie, De'Rell and Rachel. I'm very glad you can join us.

De'Rell we'll start with you. Can you tell us about your time with the Department of Education and explain how your intern experience led to your current role?

Sure. The last semester, my senior year, I was looking for internship with a journalism major. For the most part, most of my internship experiences have been at some of the local television stations. I was really looking for something different. I had a tremendous amount of interest in education policy as a journalist. So I was randomly in the career office at my university and learned about the Department of Education. Did not know much about the department so I did a little research and I interned with the Office of Communication and Outreach, because the department had a press shop and it was this connection that I did not know. I interned within the Office of Communications where I was able to utilize my major and just work on things that were of interest to me.

In my case, that translated into a position at the department. I did not know that within the Department of Education and within the Office of Communication and Outreach, that there was a team of workers who basically did youth engagement, that was connecting young people to some of the policy makers in the department. By working within that team, I was ultimately able to come on board and work at the department. Through this position, I coordinate the department's internship program.

That is great. I'm wondering if you could give us a couple of examples of different types of internships available to youth within the Department of Education.

Sure. Within the department, it is not the largest federal agency, but it is a pretty big one. That means that there are a lot of departments within the Department of Education. We have over 15 offices. Obviously, they all do many different things. In that, we enable students to intern within those offices. Generally, anything that is of interest to student, we totally have an office at ED that works on that.

What are some of the most popular offices at Ed?

When people think of federal agencies, they think of policy, so our Office of Planning Evaluation and Policy Development is certainly one of our most popular offices. Then, in addition to that, our Legislative and Congressional Affairs, that is also a very popular office at the department. Those are two popular offices.

What kinds of tasks do you do for them, do you think? >> It is wide range. A little bit of that can be research. It really depends on the office. Some offices within the department look for students with statistical background. As I mentioned, there's communication and outreach who look for good writers. The skill sets the office requires obviously depends on the work, but generally any student will probably find a position at the department.

That is great.

Rachel, I understand that the pathways initiative is a federal initiative that provides programs for opportunities across the federal government. I wanted you can tell us more about the pathways program and in particular what you do.

Sure. My name is Rachel Dorman and I work for the US office of personnel management. Our mission is to recruit, retain and honor federal employees. We are the resources arm for all of the federal government. Which means we focus on recruiting, bringing people in, but also make sure that you are developed and have training opportunities. As well as we do background checks for 90% of federal employees or contractors. We manage the largest healthcare system in the country, so the federal healthcare system.

I have one of the best jobs, I think. I get to work in our Office of Student Programs and we focus on working with both agencies across government, as well as students and recent grads to make them excited about public service in a life of public service.

I've been here for about four years. Over that time, we have created a new program called the Pathways Program, which really streamlined the way students and recent graduates can enter the federal workforce. The purpose of these programs is not only for entering the federal workforce but also developing and retaining so that you will consider careers in the federal government.

There are three parts to the Pathways Program. They have been in effect for almost 2 years now. There are three different paths. So the idea is maybe not one path is good for the same person so you there are many ways to enter federal service.

The first is the Internship Program. The idea with this program is if you are currently enrolled in school and you want to work for the government, you can get paid positions in the Pathways Internship Program. You must be a current student from high school all the way to graduate school, enrolled or accepted for enrollment and seeking a degree.

And enrolled at lease part-time or full-time. These positions can be part-time or full-time, depending on what the agency needs. And they are in every job you can imagine. We mentioned one great thing I always tell students is if you're thinking about what jobs you might want to consider, maybe watch the State of the Union address. See what the president will talk about. You get a sense of what the agencies might be hiring. For example, you might have remembered there was a big health care a lot the past few years ago. That agency may be picking up lots of employees in the healthcare field.

That is the Internship Program. The second is a Recent Graduate Program. The idea here is if you have completed your degree, you are as well for the Recent Graduate Program. To be eligible to apply, you can apply starting about six months or so before you complete your degree. And you can continue to apply for positions up to two years after you complete your

degree. Are anywhere from vocational, technical certificates, Associates degrees, and undergraduate, graduate and professional degrees.

Veterans do have some additional time to apply if they are on active duty. They have up to six years to apply. These are one-year programs.

The great thing about the Internship and Recent Graduate programs are that they offer a lot of opportunities for training and mentoring and you can be converted to a permanent position after you graduate.

The final program is our Presidential Management Program. It is run out of our office. That is for advanced degree candidates. It was created about 30 years ago we have revamped it under the Pathways Program. We do recruiting for that once a year, every fall for individuals who are getting advanced degrees. Masters degrees, law degrees, PhD's and even medical degrees. You can apply for that program during your private year -- fine your graduate school or up to two years after. If you have more questions are really interested in that pathway program you can go to our website to sign up for getting information on the latest in terms of how to become eligible. On the screen now, you can see USA jobs, which is a place where you apply for internship and recent grad programs. We will talk a little bit more of this later on. But I wanted to give you highlight of what these programs are. Thank you, Paul.

Great. Rachel, just one question: how many people actually apply to these three programs that you just mentioned, roughly every year?

The programs are not centralized in that you submit one overall application. So students and recent grads can actually apply for every single position and it is managed by the agencies so they track -- it varies. Some of the jobs here in Washington DC are little bit more competitive because people want to work here. But these positions are all over the country. Agencies have a lot of flexibility in terms of when they post positions. They are year round. So it is not just a traditional, when you think of agencies recruiting in the fall for the summer jobs. It is really looking at year round in terms of what they need for their workforce planning. >> As far as the numbers, because the program is so new, we have just collected reporting data from our agencies. We will be announcing that in the next couple of months.

That is great. Thank you very much. Let us go to Bonnie. Bonnie, can you tell us more about your internship and how you came interested for the Department of Labor?

Hi, Paul, thank you for having me here today. My story is a little bit different. I was not necessarily looking for an internship with the Department of Labor. I was a senior at UC Berkeley finishing up and I was part of the professional development program. I had a lot of concerns about working after I finish my college studies because I have a chronic health condition. At the time, I really did not think that I would be able to hold down a full-time job. It I was very nervous and did not know where to look and what to look for.

One of my instructors in my professional development class told me about a program that is put on by the American Association for people with disabilities. It is a summer internship program where they connect students, undergrad, grad, professional degree -- who have disabilities and health conditions with internships in Washington DC. My instructor really encouraged me to apply. One of my classmates was in the program and also encouraged me to apply. So I applied and I was accepted and once I was accepted, both of them said you should really think about interning with the US Department of Labor at the Office of Disability Employment Policy.

My instructor had worked there for many years and my classmate had entered -- interned there himself. They both thought it would be a great experience for me. At the time, I did not think I would be able to work full-time. I had a lot of concerns and a lot of fears about that. I also did not have a particular interest in this ability employment policy. But I heard wonderful things about the team there, type of experience I would have, and with a lot of positive peer pressure, my instructor and my friend encouraged me to apply.

I ended up there in a little bit of a different manner than some interns do. But I'm glad I did because it turned out to be a pretty incredible experience.

That is great. Thanks a lot. I also want to remind everyone that at any time, you can submit questions in the Q&A box located in the bottom right of your screen. Please feel free to do that at any time. We will be entering the Q&A period pretty soon so please feel free to send questions and we will get them to the right person who is a guest today.

Let me get back to Bonnie. Ask a follow-up question. What kind of advice would you give to youth who does not have somebody to push them as much as your peers and professors did?

That is a really great question because I has I was very lucky in that respect. I would say the first thing the people who feel overwhelmed by the application process -- as Rachel mentioned, there are a lot of different programs and some of the agencies -- it is not totally a centralized process. So, really, by being up with friends and classmates who I also have similar interests in finding an internship and creating a plan. You really need friends and family supporting you through the process and it is helpful to have someone who you can sit down with and say I'm going to make this plan for looking for opportunities in applying to these opportunities and making a schedule and brainstorming ideas. I definitely could not have done it without support. So it is really important to find some sort of support. Whether it is apparent, instructor, community member, coach, some person -- it is good to have somebody your age or also good that somebody a little older and more experienced. Somebody who you trust, somebody who is your biggest fan, somebody who has your back 100% and can really help you after school or after work. >> That would be a big piece of advice. >> And clearly in your case being highly motivated as well, pulling people together that you need in your team to help you do this.

Absolutely. You have to want it.

That is right. [laughter] >> Internships will not come to you, that is for sure. It can be overwhelming with the number of opportunities out there. And the different ways of finding

them in the different pieces of the application process. You may have to submit documents, you may need to do a series of interviews that are in person or on the phone. So it is really important to stay motivated, stay on top of things and stay organized. And having a friend or mentor to help you hold yourself accountable can be really helpful.

That is great. What I would like to do is pause for a moment to collect any questions that people might have for our guests. Then we will triage them and read them online for everyone and have some additional conversation around some topics we've covered. With that, I will pause for 1 min. and we will resume in about a minute or so. [Pause]

Okay, we have one question. This one is from Brittany. Let's see. Trying to read it. Is AmeriCorps or Peace Corps a good way to get better jobs? Perhaps you can help reply to this question. >> Rachel? De'Rell? Bonnie? This is Bonnie. There is no one experience that will guarantee you a job anywhere. If you are looking for federal job, your qualifications depend on the education are received in school, internship experience, prior work experience. However, I will say and Rachel can correct me on this, I believe there is a separate hiring program for returning Peace Corps volunteers. During my time in Washington DC, I definitely encountered many, many Peace Corps volunteers in federal jobs. However, they also had to have specific qualifications. It was not just being a Peace Corps volunteer.

Thank you. Another question from Brittany Obey. How can young college students position themselves for internships that give a launching pad -- for hire job opportunities?

This is Rachel. Can I take this question?

Sure.

There are many things that you can do to set yourselves up -- set yourself up when it comes to federal positions but I'll just give you one example for today. The first thing I would say is starting with a really solid federal resume. Federal resumes are bit different than private sector resumes. It is probably everything that you did not learn at your career center when it comes to private sector resumes. You can find a lot of information on USA jobs as well government.org on how to create a solid federal resume. It is really important that you include all your skills and accomplishments. So there was not necessarily page limit on a resume. It is really important that you use the space to show all of the things that you have accomplished. That is not necessarily employment accomplishments. A lot of people maybe cannot work or do internship during the summer because they have to use their work-study for financial aid. Or -- it is important that you highlight may be viewed done a group project in your class and you let that team. That is really good skills that in federal employees are federal managers are looking for. Not necessarily gain through employment expense. Volunteer experience, community service experience, can really be counted toward that time. A solid federal resume am I have a couple of people who you knew who have made to work for the government or go to your career center on campus or go to your one stop shop in your local community in terms of having someone look at your resume. You can never have enough people review your resume. Someone may

find something or suggested a tip. So I think the first thing is your first impression when you are applying for this position. And the thing that hiring managers look at first.

Can I add something about the AmeriCorps and Peace Corps volunteer question?

Sure.

Although I am not in a line with AmeriCorps Peace Corps , I have a lot of friends who were successful in this programs and they are a great opportunity for public service. If that is an interest of yours, doing international development worker community service, that is something I would encourage you to consider. When you return or complete those programs, you do have what we call a non-competitive appointment eligibility for federal jobs for a limited time. I think it is about two years from the time you complete a service. Do not quote me on that. What Bonnie said was absolutely correct. At a minimum, you have to be qualified for the position. If the position requires five years of experience and you only have two, then that means you're not qualified for the position. Or if it requires us make a lot of jobs in the federal government require you to have a degree in a certain subject. So accountants, for accounting positions in the government, you have to do 24 hours of accounting credits.

If you have not done those then, unfortunately, you would not be eligible for that position even if you do have that noncompetitive eligibility.

That is great. Thank you for picking up that first question and thank you Brittany and Hadid for your questions.

Moving on, it is important to do research on different type of internship opportunities available in order to find out how to apply or raising your chance of getting selected. For more information and tips about federal internships overall, visit engage.findyouthinfo.gov.

De'Rell and Rachel, I imagine our guests are interested in where to apply. What about those who say I know how to apply, I just do not know how to get myself selected, or what do I need to do to stand out from the pack? De'Rell, what does Ed look for when selecting youth internship? And what are some examples youth can do to make the application stand out?

Thank you for the question, Paul. Our eligibility requirements are simple. We require students to be 16 years of age and enrolled in an institution or have specific plans to enroll the following semester . That is the basic requirement for us. In terms of the application process, we require a resume and I think it is important to note that Rachel mentioned the federal service resume. We do not require that. So a general private sector resume, which many of you are familiar with, that is the basic thing we require. And generally one page is sufficient. We require resume, cover letter, and the application form which is a two-page document that will take 3 min. to complete. Those of the very basic requirements to intern at the department.

You mentioned the cover letter. I think a lot of people spend a lot of time focusing on the resume part of the application. Why is cover letter so important? >> The cover letter is really

important because as I mentioned in my case, when I interned, in college, the vast majority of my internships were local television stations. When I applied for the department, the cover letter was particularly important because I was able to talk about my civic engagement work, my activism work, and talk about my interest in education and policy. I was able to paint a picture of who I am as an applicant. It also explained why I was interested in the department. We realize in many cases students before they apply may not have necessarily work in the federal government before. And may not have experience related to the particular office that they are interested in applying for. So just given that, we really encourage folks to take a significant amount of time on the cover letter because once someone is looking at the application, that can be the difference in terms of you getting the internship.

That is great. Thank you. Rachel, I wonder if you have anything add to what De'Rell just suggested about how to make an application really stand out? >> Hi, Paul. I think all the comments are great. The only piece I would add is when applying for a specific pathways positions and looking for those positions on USA jobs, I think sometimes it can be a little alarming for folks. You look at the application and say there is so much information, how do I break it down. I would tell folks to try not to be overwhelmed. Look at each section of the position in terms of the overview, the duties, the instructions on how to apply. And carefully read through the entire application before you apply for the position.

When you are applying, make sure you follow directions. A lot of people do not meet the eligibility because they do not complete all of the application requirements. One example for that is if the position requires you to provide a transcript, typically it an unofficial transcript is fine, you want to be sure you include the document. Because if you do not, we can't even consider you. That is I think one of my biggest tips are students. Especially young people, if you are applying while you're still in school or right after school, your education is one of your best qualifications for these positions. So it is important that you provide that information so that you can be considered. >> Good life lesson. Follow the directions. Will serve you well. >> I would just like to add something really quick. This is Bonnie. De'Rell in Rachel's points are spot on. One thing I would also say as it helps to make your application sparkle in be different than anybody else's. In my current position, I'm doing a lot of hiring. I read 15 applications this morning, they were decent applications, nothing wrong with them, but none stood out. They all read the same. So if you are applying for an internship and you have seen a lot of resumes and cover letters from your friends, a lot of them use the words ambitious or self-motivated or detail oriented. Take all of those bland words out. Throw them out and find something new and different because a lot of people's applications end up sounding exactly the same and you never stand out and you will get passed over.

That is really good advice. Thank you, Bonnie. Rachel, I want to ask you, what advice would you give to youth that these federal internships or two exclusive are too hard to get into? >> That is a really good question. Something we hear almost every day from applicants who are applying for positions. That is one of the big reasons why we created the pathways programs in the way that they are now. Prior to the pathways programs, positions did not have to get posted online in one central place. Sometimes they did, but sometimes they did not. Sometimes they want to career center in their local area to recruit. But you would never hear about the jobs.

With the pathways programs, it is now required that every agency post their internship positions in their PMS positions on USA jobs. So there is one central place so you will have access to everything. More people may be applying for the job so it may be a little bit more competitive, but at least you know what is out there and you have the opportunity to apply for every single position.

There is a specific tool on USAJobs which can be really useful when it comes to applying for these positions. We have something called a save/search. Once you set up an account on USA jobs, it is pretty easy. If you have a save and search account, and you complete a search with all the criteria that you want in terms of the location of the job , whether internship position, or recent grad position, you can actually save a search in your account in the system can e-mail you once a day any jobs that meet the criteria. They can e-mail you daily, weekly or not at all, but you just want to save the search. So when you log into the account you do not have to redo the whole process again. That can be really helpful in terms of applying for these positions. Sometimes they're only open for couple of days so you do not want to miss out on any opportunities. These positions are for everyone. Not just for people who know people.

That is great. Thank you very much. What I would like to do is open up the questions again. If anyone has any questions, please type them into the Q&A box to the right of your screen. We will pause just for a minute for people to have time to type some questions for our guests.

[Pause] >> We do not have any questions coming at the moment, however, what I would like to do is leave the Q&A box open and available. Throughout any of the conversations that are happening while we are engaging with each other and discussing internship opportunities and experiences, please feel free to continue to ask questions. We will take them as they come.

What I would like to do is move into another part of the discussion. While the environment for getting in is competitive in measures of being taken to make it more accessible, we still have to make sure that the effort it took to get in was worthwhile. I want to direct my question to Bonnie. Bonnie, what advice would you give to students that want to make the most of the internship experiences?

That is a really great question. Having an internship is so different than being in school. You put all this effort into applying for college or university and then once you get in, you show up for class, your schedule and your day and activities are determined for you. Your teacher presents you a lecture, gives you homework, or test; that will not happen at an internship. You have a lot more control over what your experience will be like. So you really -- my two pieces of advice are you have to make a plan and you have to be proactive.

For the first part, when you walk into a classroom, your teacher has already determined what you will learn that her, how you will learn it and they already have a reason for why you will learn it and what you will do with it. But in the internship, you really need to do some thinking for your start as to what you want to get out of that internship. What are your goals? When I first started my internship, for me it wishes to figure out if I could work in an office environment. It was pretty basic, pretty much focused on survival. >> Your goal could be that

you want to become a better writer or you want to learn how this agency that you are interested in works. Or maybe you want to build a new knowledge base around employment policy. So really establishing what you want to learn, what skills you want to pick up, what knowledge base you want to acquire -- also, another thing that interns often overlook, being in an internship is not just about doing work, it is also about building relationships. And expanding your personal and professional network.

Also thinking about who you want to meet. If you do not know exactly who, what types of people. Do want to meet people who are on the accounting side, people who are in leadership? Really creating a detailed plan and then finding opportunity or a way to share this plan with your coworkers and with your supervisors. Like I said, your supervisors most likely are happy to have you and they probably have a few tasks for you. But I think many interns are surprised at how little preparation actually happens when an intern comes. Your supervisors and coworkers will be very busy and they may not have necessarily thought about how to make your internship the best ever. So you really need to have that plan and be proactive about sharing that plan with your new workplace and trying to make it happen.

Go ahead.

It works both ways. The internship has to offer and enriching experience, but at the same time the intern has to take the initiative to make the most of it.

Absolutely. Your workplace will have probably overworked and understaffed. They do not necessarily have the time to plan everything for you. Like you said, you really have to take it. And also, I think it is not just making a plan. You also have to be proactive in terms of asking for responsibility. Or looking out for opportunities for you to take on a bigger role in your workplace. Many interns sit at their desk the whole summer. I saw this before I intern, which was the national Democratic Institute. My fellow interns sat at the desk the entire summer and did a few of the activities or tasks that were assigned to them and never even realized that they could do something more or ask for something more.

I had a tipoff from a previous intern and a piece of advice, another great way to make the most out of your internship is to get in contact with people who have interned there before. They will tell you who will help you, who will help you, what are great ways to get support. They will give you the inside scoop. A previous intern told me, if you ask, they will let you go to events outside of the office. So I drew up a list of activities or events or presentations that I wanted to go to. My supervisor said, great, go. So as my fellow interns sat at the desk doing pretty much very little, I was out and about town meeting new people, learning new knowledge, expanding my experience. You really have to be proactive and go for it.

That is a really good point. Rachel, as an intern manager, what steps do you ensure that the intern experiences of high-quality?

Hi, Paul. I would say it is really important to me that interns have a meaningful work experience. While there may be some administrative tasks that are not the most fun, for

example, my office currently just moved from one floor to another and we have an intern was in high school. She helped us pack up a lot of files and office supplies. But we tried to really explain to her what impact that would have in terms of helping our team. Even when you maybe are not doing the most fun things, it is really important that you learn where that comes into the bigger picture of the organization.

The other thing that I really try to do when we have a new intern for new employee on our team is find out what their interests are. And try and design at least one special project that they can work on. A larger project that they can go back and forth to over the course of their experience. Whether it is the summer, or semester, something that when there is not a short task to do, it or they have downtime, they can go back and work on it. By the end of the semester, the end of project, they have something they have completed at the end that they can say that they have done for the resume. So it is not just for me daily tasks, but may be working on something larger that can help our organization.

One example to that as we were looking at redesigning content for our website. It involved researching many different websites and pulling links and writing new content. It was not a project that will take a day or two. So one intern had a very real interest in that. We have them work on that over the course of many months.

The third thing I want to say is that I am always looking for interns who are interested in taking initiative. So I really like the example that Bonnie gave in terms of here are some events that she was interested in. If a student came to me and said the same thing, I would say that is great. And may forward an opportunity, one opportunity, but I would not have the time to come up with an entire plan. So I really appreciate it when interns are using the opportunity to manage their own career and manage their own interests.

That is great. Moving to De'Rell, what does ED do to provide a high-quality experience. In particular, what do in -- interest due to ensure they have a valuable experience?

It is really interesting at ED because I mentioned I was a former intern. I remember when I was an intern, there were no formalized activities. In fact, I did not even know there were several dozens of other interns at ED. So just over the course of the last five years of the program, it has improved tremendously. I think that is in part because of Secretary Duncan's leadership and he is someone who thinks we need to prepare all students to succeed in a competitive global economy. Through internships, that is traditionally one platform for that happening.

Over the course of the last five years, the program has changed and we realize that most of the department intern experience will be working within individual offices, we provide personal development opportunities so that interns have a chance to develop themselves fashionably through a broad range of events that we have. Including resume writing workshops, external events and our education policy briefings for department employees, but we extend them to interns to attend as well.

We also have a brown bag lunch series, which is particular popular amongst interns. It allows them unique and targeted opportunities for professional development. Once a week, we bring members of the Ed team from senior leadership all the way up to Secretary. Duncan to younger staff, all of the assistant secretaries, to really meet with interns once a week. I think this underscores the point that Bonnie made earlier. There are folks that you're interested in meeting, at some point or another throughout the duration of your Ed internship experience, you will have an opportunity to meet. Whether it is a secretary or a senior leader whose work might be of interest to you. Those sessions are really informal. We have assistant secretaries who tell students all the time, reach out to me. For the most part, many of our senior leaders have scheduled one-on-one meetings with interns. Secretary Duncan, every cohort, meets with at least three students. That is a big, big deal. It is very difficult to get on the secretary's schedule, but he really makes the time to meet with students. Those are three ways by which we offer professional development to students.

I will open this up to everyone. What would you say students should look out for when selecting internship in particular? And how might they gauge whether the internship is high-quality for them? >> This is Rachel. I will start with that question. Feel free to add to my response. I think that one thing is to use your gut when you're interviewing for the position. If you feel like you're having a good rapport with the manager, interviews I know can be stressful and kind of scary experiences, but trust your instincts in terms of do you think this could be an exciting opportunity. A lot of times, your gut will be right in terms of I think I could learn a lot here. Try to talk to some of the team members before you have an opportunity to make a decision. There is a difference between your teammates and maybe your manager. Find out who I will be working with on a day-to-day. Try to ask lots of questions. Is there opportunity for you to be interviewed, but typically at every interview, the person interviewing will ask if you have questions. They want to hear a couple of questions.

Use this as a way to make an informed choice about whether or not this may be a good fit. It is also really important to remember with internships, there is really an opportunity to explore what you like and what you do not like. So you can use the interview almost the same way, to gauge what might be the best fit for you at that time in your life.

That is great. De'Rell, Bonnie, demanding that?

I think it is really important, all of the points that Rachael made. Just from my personal standpoint, all of my internships were in the television field and I thought I would be a reporter. Because of my experience at the department, I was able to learn more about the federal government. As a result, I now found that my passion is in education policy. In fact I'm going for my Masters degree. It really informed me personally.

Do you due diligence in terms of researching. Again, we found that even before students interned at the department, they hear these names. So we have offices which are the White House initiative excellence for Hispanics it is very long and ambiguous name so sometimes I think students do not know necessarily with the work of the office is. Visit the website. Do not hesitate to reach out, find a contact and shoot them an e-mail. I suggest that you have a

conversation and tell them that you are interested in the internship. All of those things, I think, will help you before you make a decision to intern somewhere that might not necessarily be the best fit.

That is great. I have one more question for all three of you. Before we go into more questions and answers, what advice would you give today overall? What is something you wish you knew when you were in their shoes? Let us keep it with a very quick piece of information that you would have liked to have known when you were in their shoes.

This is Bonnie. This is sort of a piggyback off of the previous question, which is that it is not necessarily the content and the subject matter in which you are working that matters, it is the experience you are having. The point of an internship that may not be specifically related to what you want to do -- it can be better if you will get a better experience. For example, I had a friend who was working for a very famous congressperson, a member of Congress.

Theoretically, my friend's internship that was much more prestigious than mine. I was working for a small agency in the department of labor that nobody had heard of. My internship, because it gave me so much freedom and put so much work into my professional development, was a much better experience and prepared me so much better for the future than where he was sitting at a desk answering a phone.

That is great. Rachel? One bit of quick advice for people.

I would say be present and just be ready for every opportunity that comes available. A lot of times just because you are physically in the office, you get opportunities to go to meetings and things, always come professionally dressed as appropriate for that office environment. In the office environment you are working in, and may not necessarily mean working a suit everyday, but just come looking dressed somewhat professionally. A lot of times, because I see someone, I will think, I should just bring them along with me. So if I do not see you, and sometimes I just will not think about it. There are often opportunities that come for people who are just ready for that opportunity and available.

Great. De'Rell, one quick item from you.

I would say just apply, apply, apply. Especially for summer positions. But just generally throughout the course of the school year you should apply to multiple internships just because many internships, including the departments, are extremely competitive. We receive upwards of 1000 applications for about 125 to 150 positions. So it is an extremely competitive program.

I just always say have a plan B or C does because just in case an opportunity does not pan out. We host internships during the fall, spring and during the summer, so hypothetically if you are not selected for the summer, you can try again in the fall. Lastly, one point that I did not make earlier is that the department has seven regional offices. If you are unable to intern in the department here in DC, you can also intern in one of our regional offices. We have them in Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Atlanta, Chicago, Kansas City, Denver, San Francisco and Seattle. So those are also available. Just apply it just be persistent.

That is great. Thank you all for that. We have a question from Rhasaan Nichols who asks what kind of skills and experiences will make college students stand out for internship applications? I think this question is reflecting the comments that several of you made already about you see a lot of applications that look the same, there is nothing that differential them from the other one underneath it. What types of things you think will really make the application stand out? What kinds of examples have you seen?

This is Bonnie. I would say what makes it stand out is not listing that you have the skill, but listing how you have used that skill and what the impact was. Let's say that you a very great at managing other people. Instead of listing on your application managed five volunteers at my student club, you would say what impact did you good management skills have? So change that to say built a strong team. Or improved communication between volunteers. Or you could even be more specific, and show what impact you had as opposed to just that skill is.

Great. De'Rell? Rachel? We look for students with any given number skill sets. We look for communication skills, Work ethic, able to work in teams, problem solvers, computer skills, detail oriented, they vary depending upon the office. Ultimately, we want students who are interested in the work of the department. Again, there is no one particular thing that we look for. Like I mentioned earlier, you just have to be 16 years of age and enrolled in an institution. Beyond those, we are looking for someone who is really interested in coming to work and interested in the work we're doing. That is the most important. Just understand -- there are folks who review your applications, so your resume and cover letter, those are particularly important to the department. Just take the time to really think about what you are writing and realize that someone will read it on the other end.

That is great. Thank you. I have one last question from Brittany Obey, How likely is it for an intern to be hired at the internship? >> This is Rachel. I will take this question first. These positions are very competitive. That does not mean that you cannot have an opportunity with the pathways programs are any of the other internship programs that are out there. For example, I do have data on the presidential management fellows program, so that is the third program I mentioned as part of the pathways programs. It is more advanced degree candidates. In that program, we are looking for the next leaders in federal service.

For the 2013 class, we had about 12,000 applications for about 600 slots. You can get the sense of how competitive it is. We did not go from 12,000 to 600 at just one cut. There were several rounds to narrow down the field. That it is a pretty competitive process overall in terms of how likely but that does not mean that you should not apply and be considered for any position that interest you.

It is really important to think about the quality that you're putting in each application. I mentioned resumes earlier and that is really important. It is also important to tailor your resume for each application. That does not mean necessarily rewriting your resume, but actually looking at the announcement and what the job is asking for. If there are words in the announcement that are the same or similar to the words that are in your resume, their similar

but not the same, or if there's a skill or expertise that is maybe lower down in your resume but is a specific request in the job, put that at the top. Because that is what that hiring manager is looking for. That is what we mean when we say tailoring your resume. Not necessarily redoing it is time, but actually putting that a bit of effort so that the hiring manager knows I really put some thought into applying for this job. I think that really makes a difference in terms of whether or not your application is taken seriously.

It does happen, because one of I guests, De'Rell, who actually did that, for being an intern to actually having a position.

Bonnie, do you have anything to add to that?

I would say it is a tough question to ask because I do not actually know the numbers of how many interns are converted into full-time jobs. I would say that the meaning of an internship has change a lot over the years. As early as maybe 10 or 15 years ago, employers generally brought on interns as a way of doing advanced training and screening with the intention of bring them on as employees. I think that is very different. Very few interns that I knew actually were hired by the places that work for them.

That does not mean that you should not do an internship because your internship will prepare you for work somewhere else. But I would not necessarily assume that an agency will hire you. And I would really have an honest conversation with your supervisors. Maybe midway through your internship where you express your interest in continuing on and you ask them about what opportunities might be available. I think a lot of interns wait until the very end of their internship and then say what ok, can you hire me now? It is a conversation that your supervisors probably would have been interested in earlier in the game.

Great. We are close to the end of our time. I would like to let our participants know that you can find more information about federal internships, important skills and success and more at engage.findyouthinfo.gov. We would love to hear from you. Also, please send your internship stories and experiences to ye4c@air.org or share them with us on our Facebook page at Youth Engaged 4 Change.

The more information about pathways program, please refer to the information on the screen or e-mail pathways that OPM.gov. I'm behalf of the interagency workgroup groups I would like to thank our guests Bonnie Prestridge, Rachel Doman and De'Rell Bonner with US Department of Education.

Thank you all for joining us and enjoy the rest of your day.